

May 2002

## **St. Maries Creosote Site St. Maries, Idaho**

*Creosote contamination has been found at the St. Maries Site, which is along the south bank of the St. Joe River, on the outskirts of St. Maries, Idaho. At this time, EPA is delaying a decision on whether to list the site on the National Priorities List, the list of the nation's most contaminated hazardous waste sites identified for long-term cleanup. (For more details, see "Site History" at the end of this fact sheet).*

### **Community Interviews: EPA Would Like to Hear From You**

On June 17 and 18, EPA staff will be in St. Maries to interview community members, local government officials, and other interested parties before remedial investigation (RI) field work begins at the site this July. These interviews are being done to prepare the site's Community Involvement Plan. EPA will ask the community about site-related concerns, and about how we can best communicate site information. (Some sample questions are, "When did you first learn about this site?" and, "How would you like to be involved in future site-related activities?")

We want to ensure that we accurately capture your input, and welcome all comments, ideas, and suggestions. We invite you to meet with us during one of the following blocks of time:

#### **Monday, June 17**

**4:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

St. Maries Public Library  
822 W. College Avenue  
St. Maries, Idaho

#### **Tuesday, June 18**

**1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**

St. Maries Public Library

To schedule an interview or get more information, please call **Debra Sherbina at (206) 553-0247, or toll-free at 1-800-424-4372, extension 0247.** *It is also possible to schedule a telephone interview.*

### **What Happens Next?**

This July, the City of St. Maries and Carney Products Company, Ltd., two of the site's potentially responsible parties (PRPs), will begin the site investigation, called a remedial investigation, or RI. The goal of the RI is to define what types of contamination exist at the site, how much exists, and how far it extends. The RI will also evaluate the speed and direction contamination is traveling, as well as conditions that allow for it to move. This information will be used to evaluate potential cleanup options for the site.

The RI will include sampling and testing of the following: surface and subsurface soil, riverbank

soil, groundwater, surface and subsurface sediment, and surface water. The investigation will focus on the area of the former wood-treating facility and the river immediately north of the facility. If site-related contamination is found beyond this area, the boundaries of the study area will be expanded.

The city and Carney Products have looked closely at all existing site information to identify any data gaps. To date, they have submitted several documents. In consultation with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, EPA has approved the Project Management Plan, Data Management Plan, and the Summary of Data Gaps Report. The Draft Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Work Plan, which included the Sampling and Analysis Plan and Site-Specific Health and Safety Plan, was submitted to EPA and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe for review on April 23, 2002. EPA and the Tribe are currently reviewing this document. Sample collection for the remedial investigation is expected to begin this July.

### **Preliminary Site Cleanup Goals (Based on Available Information)**

- ➔ Control or eliminate sources of creosote contamination, and other contamination at the site
- ➔ Meet Coeur d'Alene Tribal Water Quality Standards in the St. Joe River
- ➔ Confirm preliminary information that domestic water supplies are not affected by site contaminants. If any nearby domestic water supplies are found that could be affected, protect these supplies.
- ➔ Prevent or reduce storm water runoff containing contaminated soil from reaching the St. Joe River
- ➔ Reduce or eliminate any exposure to contamination at the site that could impact people or the environment

### **Are You Interested in Applying for a Technical Assistance Grant?**

A Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) is available for any site proposed to the Superfund National Priorities List. As a proposed site, St. Maries is eligible for a grant. The grant provides funds to *citizen groups* that are affected by Superfund. Citizen groups can apply for grant money to hire technical advisors to help interpret and explain technical materials produced as part of the investigation and cleanup process.

TAGs up to \$50,000 are available from EPA. A local share contribution of 20% of total program cost is required. Groups can count the value of volunteer services and contributions of supplies (called "in-kind contributions") toward the required 20% match. To receive more detailed information about TAGs and qualifications, please call ***Marianne Deppman, EPA Region 10 TAG Coordinator, at (206) 553-1237, or toll-free at 1-800-424-4372, extension 1237.***

### **Health and Environmental Concerns**

Previous tests show three sources of creosote contamination at the St. Maries Creosote Site: soil and groundwater contamination at the former wood treating facility, contaminated soil in the river bank, and contaminated river bottom sediments. This contamination could potentially affect sensitive animal habitat and endangered fishery resources in the St. Joe River. It could also

potentially pose a human health concern. Long-term exposure to low levels of creosote can cause skin damage, such as blistering or peeling. Long-term exposure to higher levels of creosote and direct contact with the skin can cause cancer. Data collected during the RI will be evaluated to find out whether people, animals, or fish could be affected.

### **Site Background**

The St. Maries Creosote site is on the outskirts of the city of St. Maries, Idaho, along the south bank of the St. Joe River, in Benewah County. The site is within the boundaries of the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. The facility operated as a creosote wood pole treating plant from the late 1930s until sometime in the 1960s. The site is currently being used for peeling, sorting, and storage of untreated wood poles.

In December 1998, the City of St. Maries, which has leased the property to various entities since the 1930s, reported an oily sheen on the bank and in the water of the St. Joe River to the federal National Response Center. Because it was necessary to address this creosote release quickly, EPA issued an order to the city and the current lessee of the property, Carney Products Company, Ltd., to remove the creosote seeps and contaminated soil along the river bank. In February 1999, the city and Carney Products did an emergency removal, digging up about 195 tons of debris and contaminated soil and moving it to a hazardous waste landfill. This action was successful in stabilizing the site. However, creosote contamination remains.

Since the removal action was finished, creosote has been observed intermittently in the river. It appears to be moving upward from the river bottom next to the site. Between 1998 and 2000, sampling was done to further evaluate site conditions. This work included analyzing approximately 190 soil, sediment, groundwater, and surface water samples. In November 1999, tests found elevated levels of creosote in the St. Joe River sediments, particularly along the riverbank in front of the site. In December 2000, the site was proposed to the EPA National Priorities List of the nation's most contaminated sites targeted for cleanup.

In August 2001, the City of St. Maries and Carney Products Company, Ltd., two of the site's potentially responsible parties (PRPs), signed a Consent Order with EPA agreeing to conduct a site study and evaluate cleanup options. This process is called a "Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study" (RI/FS), and will assess the nature and extent of contamination, assess any long-term risks to human health or the environment, and evaluate cleanup options. EPA and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe will oversee the work, which is targeted for completion by the fall of 2003. Another potentially responsible party, B. J. Carney and Company, failed to reach agreement with the other parties, and therefore did not join the Consent Order.

At this time, EPA is delaying a decision on whether to list the St. Maries site on the National Priorities List, while the RI/FS is conducted. Listing still remains an option for the future. Future decisions on listing will depend on the type of cleanup remedy that is identified for the site, as well as the willingness of the potentially responsible parties to voluntarily do the cleanup.

### **Contacts**

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You may also call our toll free number: **1-800-424-4372**

*EPA's Internet homepage:* **<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth>**

To reach the webpage for the St. Maries site, click on "Index," then "S."

*Please contact one of the EPA numbers listed above for large-print documents, sign language interpretation, and other services.*